

Message Text

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67

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 EUR-08 VO-03 SCA-01 PM-03 H-01 INR-05

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O 042232Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 900

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 2289

FOR: SISCO AND AF FROM EASUM

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,US, SF

SUBJECT: ADMIRAL JOHNSON'S VISA REQUEST

REF: CAPE TOWN 705 & 706

1. SUMMARY: I BELIEVE WE ARE FOLLOWING THE WRONG STRATEGY ON ADMIRAL JOHNSON'S VISA REQUEST. I CONSIDER HIS VISIT EXTREMELY UNTIMELY, AND LADEN WITH SERIOUS PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSEQUENCES FOR US IN AFRICA, THE US, AND EUROPE. I ALSO FEAR IT GIVES THE WRONG SIGNAL TO SOUTH AFRICA AND ONE WHICH THEY WILL NOT FAIL TO EXPLOIT. I DO NOT DENY THAT A REFUSAL OF THE VISA WOULD PROBABLY PRODUCE CRITICISM FROM US DOMESTIC QUARTERS. I AM PERSONALLY INCLINED TO THINK THAT SHORTRUN CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH CRITICISM ARE PROBABLY LESS DAMAGING THAN THE LONGER RUN FALLOUT WE WILL SUFFER FROM LETTING HIM COME. I BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THERE MAY BE AN EASIER RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM IF WE PLAY OUR CARDS RIGHT - THAT IS, BY VOLUNTARY DECISION BY THE SAG TO WITHDRAW THE VISA REQUEST.

2. COLORATION BEING PUT ON VISIT BY SOUTH AFRICAN
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PRESS, COMBINED WITH ORIGINAL "OFFICIAL" LABEL APPLIED

BY CONGRESSMAN WYMAN, BRINGS VISIT VERY MUCH WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF CURRENT STATE-DEFENSE GUIDANCE OF 1971 (SEE CAPE TOWN'S 705). UNDER TERMS OF THIS GUIDANCE VISA COULD RPT COULD BE REFUSED "FOR FOREIGN POLICY REASONS".

"OFFICIAL" COMPLEXION OF VISIT IS ALL THE MORE EVIDENT IN FACE OF A) FAILURE TO DATE OF SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO DENY THAT OFFICIAL TALKS ON DEFENSE MATTERS WILL BE HELD, AND B) EVIDENCE THAT DEFENSE FORCES CHIEF ADMIRAL BIERMAN AND THEREFORE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY BUREAUCRACY ARE BEHIND THE REQUEST.

3. IF THE VISA IS ISSUED, THERE IS BOUND TO BE CRITICISM TO EFFECT THAT SCALI'S STATEMENT ABOUT NO RPT NO US INTENT TO EMBARK ON ANY NAVAL OR MILITARY COLLABORATION WAS MISLEADING. WE ARE STILL EXPLAINING WHY WE ISSUED THE BIERMAN VISA. NOW JOHNSON MAKES THE EXPLANATION MUCH LESS PERSUASIVE AND ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT.

4. MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, THAN THIS KIND OF CRITICISM WILL BE THE IMPLICATIONS OF VISA ISSUANCE FOR THE WAY IN WHICH SOUTH AFRICANS, AIDED BY THEIR PRESS, WILL INTERPRET OUR ACTION. THEY WILL SEE IT AS FORTIFYING THEIR BELIEF THAT WHEN THEY PUSH US HARD ENOUGH WE FOLD. RESULT IN SOUTH AFRICA OF REFUSAL OF VISA, ON OTHER HAND, WOULD BE GREATER AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF FACT THAT US MEANS BUSINESS AND THAT SCALI'S STATEMENT AT UN WAS NOT EMPTY RHETORIC. IT WOULD ALSO SERVE AS ELOQUENT EXAMPLE OF US UNWILLINGNESS TAKE BLACK AFRICAN FLAK UNNECESSARILY ON SOUTH AFRICAN BEHALF.

5. IN MORE NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES I WOULD NOT RPT NOT OPPOSE SUCH A VISIT AS ADMIRAL JOHNSON'S. BUT TODAY'S CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NOT NORMAL. WE HAVE HAD BOTHA AND VORSTER SPEECHES, EXPULSION VETO, AND GROWING CONTROVERSY OVER SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT AND ALLEGED US/UK COLLUSION IN THAT REGARD. WE ARE ACCORDINGLY OBLIGED TO TREAD AN INCREASINGLY NARROW PATH BETWEEN A) THOSE ACTIONS WE MUST CONTINUE TO TAKE TO SHOW SOUTH AFRICA WE RECOGNIZE, APPRECIATE, AND ENCOURAGE CURRENT SIGNS OF CHANGE IN ITS APPROACH TO RHODESIA, NAMIBIA, AND APARTHEID, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND B) THOSE ACTIONS NECESSARY TO SHOW SOUTH AFRICA, BLACK AFRICA AND THE US PUBLIC THAT WE INTEND TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON. WE WILL BE CONSTANTLY OBLIGED TO MAKE TOUGH DECISIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THESE TWO BROAD CRITERIA. A VISIT BY ADMIRAL JOHNSON WILL PRODUCE ONLY A VERY MARGINAL PLUS ON THE FIRST SCORE. ON THE SECOND, IT IS CERTAIN TO BE A STRONG MINUS, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO WAY EFFECTIVELY TO RESTRICT HIS ACTIVITIES OR CAMOUFLAGE

THE PURPOSES OF HIS CONVERSATIONS.

6. IF DEPARTMENT ACCEPTS LOGIC OF ARGUMENT PRESENTED ABOVE, I WOULD PROPOSE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER FOLLOWING COURSE OF ACTION. DEPARTMENT WOULD INSTRUCT EMBASSY CAPETOWN CALL ON FONMIN MULLER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO DISCUSS ADMIRAL JOHNSON'S VISA REQUEST. EMBASSY WOULD FOLLOW LINE PROPOSED IN CAPETOWN 706, PARTICULARLY PARAGRAPH FOUR. IN ADDITION EMBASSY MIGHT WISH EXPLAIN THAT WE ARE GETTING HEAVY FLAK FROM BLACK AFRICA ON UN VETO, THAT JOHNSON VISIT WOULD RISK SERIOUS FURTHER DAMAGE TO CREDIBILITY OF US POLICIES ON RHODESIA, NAMIBIA, AND APARTHEID, AND THAT VISIT WOULD SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER DIALOGUE BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND BLACK AFRICAN LEADERS. EMBASSY WOULD BE TOLD TO AVOID ANY SUGGESTION THAT WE MIGHT REVERSE OUR DECISION TO APPROVE B-2 VISA REQUEST. OBJECTIVE OF CONVERSATION WOULD BE TO SHOW MULLER THE DIFFICULTY THIS REQUEST PRESENTS FOR US (PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS TREATMENT), THE IMPLICATIONS WE BELIEVE JOHNSON'S VISIT MAY HAVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S IMAGE AND CURRENT OBJECTIVES ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA, AND THE INACCURATE AND UNFORTUNATE IMPRESSION OF US ATTITUDES THAT IT WILL FOSTER IN SOUTH AFRICA. WE WOULD HOPE MULLER WOULD SEE PRESENTATION IN THIS LIGHT AND ACCORDINGLY TAKE STEPS TO HAVE VISA REQUEST WITHDRAWN.

7. ABOVE COURSE OF ACTION WOULD SPARE US THE NEED TO EXPLAIN ANY US "DENIAL" OF VISA. WE WOULD BE ABLE INFORM CONGRESSMAN WYMAN AND OTHER POSSIBLE QUESTIONERS WITH CLEAR CONSCIENCE THAT IT WAS SAG'S DECISION WITHDRAW REQUEST AND THAT SUCH DECISION TAKEN WITHOUT PRESSURE OR THREAT OF REFUSAL FROM US.
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8. I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS TELEGRAM WITH AMBASSADOR HURD, WHO ARRIVED LUSAKA THIS EVENING. HE IS IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT.
WILKOWSKI

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